

Claims:

1. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream to a virtual meeting attendee comprising the steps of:

monitoring a plurality of data streams being communicated between a plurality of virtual meeting standard users, said plurality of data streams including a plurality of continuous data streams communicated from each of said plurality of virtual meeting standard users to others of said virtual meeting standard users; and,

recognizing at least one primary data stream from said plurality of data streams and communicating said at least one primary data stream to at least one virtual meeting primary user.

2. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 wherein said virtual meeting standard users have higher bandwidth capacity than said at least one primary user.

3. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of continuous data streams includes an identifier, and wherein the method further includes the step of comparing each of said identifiers to a stored primary data stream identifier to recognize said primary data stream.

4. A method for communicating at least one primary data streams as defined by claim 3 wherein said plurality of continuous data streams comprise discretely packetized digital data in real-time, and wherein said identifiers comprise information from a stream header included with each discrete packet.

5. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 wherein the step of monitoring a plurality of data streams includes receiving said plurality of data streams over a first interface, and

wherein the step of communicating said primary data stream is performed using a second interface.

6. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 wherein each of said continuous data streams comprises a continuous stream of streaming real-time data contained in discrete packets communicated across a packet switched network.

7. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 6 wherein each of said discrete packets has a header portion that includes an identifier that identifies the source of said data stream.

8. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of standard users comprises a virtual meeting conference room, and wherein said plurality of continuous data streams being communicated from each of said standard users includes at least one real-time video data stream and at least one real-time audio data stream.

9. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 8 wherein said plurality of continuous data streams communicated from each of said standard users includes a plurality of video data streams.

10. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 wherein the step of communicating said primary data stream to a virtual meeting primary user includes communicating said primary data stream to a primary port, said virtual meeting primary user in communication with said primary port.

11. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 wherein said at least one primary data stream includes at

least a first and a second primary data stream, and wherein said at least one primary user includes at least a first and a second primary user, and wherein the step of communicating said at least one primary data stream to said at least one primary user includes communicating said first primary stream to said first primary user but not said second primary user and communicating said second primary data stream to said second primary user but not said first primary user.

12. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 and further including the step of receiving at least one primary selection command, and of using said at least one primary selection command to recognize said at least one primary data stream.

13. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 12 wherein the step of receiving said at least one primary selection command includes receiving said at least one primary selection command from one of said plurality of standard users.

14. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 12 wherein the step of receiving said at least one primary selection command includes receiving said at least one primary selection command from one of said at least one virtual meeting primary users.

15. A method for communicating at least one primary data stream as defined by claim 1 and further including the step of receiving at least one continuous data stream from said at least one virtual meeting primary user and communicating said at least one continuous data stream to each of said plurality of virtual meeting standard users.

16. A method for communicating one or more primary data streams as defined by claim 1 and further including the step of identifying said at least one primary user.

17. A method for communicating one or more primary data streams as defined by claim 16 wherein the step of identifying said at least one primary user comprises an automated step of determining the bandwidth capacity for said at least one primary user.

18. A method for communicating one or more primary data streams as defined by claim 1 wherein the step of communicating said at least one primary data stream to said primary user comprises communicating only said at least one primary data stream to said primary user.

19. A method for communicating one or more primary data streams as defined by claim 1 wherein said at least one primary data stream comprises a plurality of primary data streams.

20. A method for communicating one or more primary data streams over a network comprising the steps of:

receiving a plurality of real-time streaming video data signals and at least one streaming real-time audio data signal from each of a plurality of standard users connected by a network and communicating said streaming real-time video data signals and said at least one streaming real-time audio data signal to all others of said plurality of standard users over said network, said streaming real-time video and audio data signals each comprising discretely packetized data, each of said plurality of streaming real-time video data signals and said at least one streaming real-time audio data signal having a unique identifier, each of said plurality of standard users connected to said network via a connection having at least a first bandwidth capacity;

receiving a primary selection command that identifies at least one of said plurality of streaming real-time video data signals and said at least one streaming real-time audio stream as a primary data signal;

using said primary selection command to identify said at least one primary data signal from said plurality of streaming real-time video data signals and said at least one streaming real-time audio signal; and,

communicating only said at least one primary data signal to at least one primary user over said network, said at least one primary user connected to said network with a connection having a bandwidth capacity of less than said first bandwidth capacity.

21. A computer program product for communicating one or more primary data streams during a virtual meeting, the computer program product comprising computer readable instructions stored on a computer readable medium, the instructions when executed causing one or more computers to perform the steps of:

communicate a plurality of continuous real-time data streams that include discretely packetized video and audio data between a plurality of standard users; and,

identify a primary subset of said plurality of continuous real-time data streams and communicate said primary subset to one or more primary users.

22. A computer program product as defined by claim 21 wherein the program instructions further cause the one or more computers to:

identify said primary subset by comparing a unique data stream identifier from each of said plurality of continuous real-time data streams to one or more stored primary stream identifiers.

23. A computer program product as defined by claim 21 wherein the program instructions further cause the one or more computers to receive and process a primary stream identification command that includes said one or more stored primary stream identifiers.

24. A computer program product as defined by claim 23 wherein said primary stream identification command is a first primary stream identification command, and wherein the program instructions when executed further cause the computer to change said primary subset after receiving a second primary identity change command.

25. A computer system including the computer program product as defined by claim 21, said computer system further including one or more computers that have one or more memories on which said computer readable instructions are stored, said one or more computers connected to one another by a packet based network.

26. A method for communicating one or more primary data streams in a virtual meeting environment comprising the steps of:

- linking a conference interface with a plurality of standard virtual meeting attendees over a network using at least one port assigned assigned to said standard users;

- linking said conference interface with at least one primary meeting attendee over said network using at least one primary port;

- receiving a plurality of packet based real-time data streams from each of said plurality of standard meeting attendees with said at least one first port, each of said plurality of real-time data streams having a unique identifier and containing one or more of audio or video data, communicating said plurality of real-time data streams from each of said plurality of standard meeting attendees to all others of said plurality of standard meeting attendees;

- monitoring said plurality of real-time data streams received from each of said plurality of standard meeting attendees;

- comparing said unique identifier from each of said plurality of real-time data streams to a stored primary stream identifier, categorizing any of said real-time data streams having an identifier matching said primary identifier as a primary data stream; and,

communicating said primary stream to said primary meeting attendee using said primary port.